

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 AID-20 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 IO-14 SCCT-02 ACDA-19 MC-02

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DRC-01 /206 W

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R 310725Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2135

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

COMIDEASTFOR

CINCLANT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOGADISCIO 1203

MILITARY FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS MASS PBOR ET SO UR

SUBJ: SOMALI INTENTIONS TOWARD ETHIOPIA

1. SUMMARY: PODGORNÝ VISIT, SOVIET/SOMALI FRIENDSHIP TREATY AND GSDR ACQUISITION MORE SOPHISTICATED ARMAMENTS (E.G., MIG21'S) HAVE RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT SOMALIA'S INTENTIONS IN HORN AND HAVE INCREASED NERVOUSNESS OF ITS NEIGHBORS. WE DO NOT RPT NOT, HOWEVER, BELIEVE SOMALIA IS LIKELY TO LAUNCH MILITARY ACTION AGAINST ETHIOPIA UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS. WE HAVE
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NOT RPT NOT SEEN SIGNS OF PREPARATION FOR SUCH A MOVE. WE BE-

LIEVE US OR OTHER INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES WOULD DETECT SUCH PREPARATIONS.

2. SOMALI LEADERSHIP WISHES TO ACQUIRE OGADEN, BUT THEY DO NOT RPT NOT WANT TO PAY HIGH PRICE IN MONEY OR BLOOD, INITIALLY OR OVER TIME. THEY WOULD PREFER TO TAKE IT BY PEACEFUL MEANS. WE BELIEVE THEY MIGHT USE FORCE, HOWEVER, IF THEY FELT: 1) THE MILITARY ACTION WOULD BE BRIEF AND DECISIVE; 2) THEY WOULD BE LEFT IN SECURE POSSESSION OF SUBSTANTIAL PART OF OGADEN (I.E., INITIAL GAINS WOULD NOT RPT NOT SUBSEQUENTLY BE LOST DUE TO MILITARY OR DIPLOMATIC PRESSURES); 3) THEY HAD NO IMMINENT PROSPECT OF OBTAINING OGADEN BY PEACEFUL MEANS; AND 4) THAT DELAY WOULD NOT IMPROVE THEIR MILITARY AND POLITICAL POSITION. WE DO NOT RPT NOT THINK SOMALIS FEEL THESE ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS ARE MET AT PRESENT. END SUMMARY.

3. SOMALIS SEEM TO BELIEVE ETHIOPIA CAPABLE OF MOUNTING STRONG AND VIGOROUS RESISTANCE TO SOMALI MILITARY ACTION. SOMALIS ASSERT THAT ANY PREPONDERANCE OF FORCE THEY HAVE IN OGADEN ZONE IS FAR LESS THAN THAT TRADITIONALLY NEEDED BY ATTACKER. THEY KNOW THEY HAVE SUPERIORITY IN CERTAIN TYPES OF EQUIPMENT, BUT THEY ALSO KNOW THEIR ABILITY TO USE MORE SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS - E.G., MIG 21'S - IS EXTREMELY LIMITED, AND WILL INCREASE ONLY SLOWLY. THEY OFTEN REFER TO ETHIOPIAN SUPERIORITY IN NUMBER OF MEN UNDER ARMS, AND IN OVERALL POPULATION AND RESOURCE BASE - FACTORS WHICH THEY FEEL WOULD BE IMPORTANT IN EXPECTED ETHIOPIAN COUNTERATTACK, PERHAPS AFTER MONTHS OF PREPARATION. FINALLY, SOMALIS HAVE NOTED VIGOR OF US REACTION TO ATTACKS ON OUR FRIENDS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF WORLD AND MAY WELL FEAR THAT IN EVENT OF SOMALI MOVE IEG WOULD BENEFIT FROM DIRECT OR INDIRECT US INTERVENTION THAT WOULD SWIFTLY AFFECT MILITARY BALANCE.

4. FACTOR WHICH COULD CHANGE SOMALI ASSESSMENT OF MILITARY PICTURE WOULD BE CONFIDENCE THAT AN INITIAL SUCCESSFUL MILITARY THRUST ON THEIR PART WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY INTERNATIONAL IMPOSITION OF A CEASE-FIRE IN PLACE - PROBABLY WITH SUPPORT OF SOVIETS AND SOME ARAB STATES - WHICH WOULD PROTECT THEM FROM ETHIOPIAN COUNTER-ATTACK AND LEAVE THEM IN STRONG BARGAINING POSITION. WE DO NOT RPT NOT HOWEVER BELIEVE THAT SOMALIS COULD BE VERY CONFIDENT THAT IEG COULD BE SECURELY AND PERMANENTLY CONFIDENTIAL

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BOUND BY SUCH A CEASE-FIRE, ESPECIALLY GIVEN SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT WHICH THEY WOULD EXPECT ETHIOPIA TO RECEIVE FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA AND US.

5. GSDR DOES NOT RPT NOT APPEAR TO BELIEVE THAT LACK OF POLITICAL COHESION IN ETHIOPIA HAS REACHED POINT WHERE IEG UNABLE MARSHALL RESISTANCE TO SOMALI INCURSION. THEY VIEW FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AS UNCERTAIN BUT FULL OF PROMISE FOR THEIR IRREDENTIST

HOPES. THEY FEEL PREMATURE SOMALI MILITARY MOVE COULD IMPEDE
DISINTEGRATION OF EMPIRE. WERE SOMALIS TO CONCLUDE THAT STRONG
AND AGGRESSIVE MILITARY GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE EMERGING FROM CURRENT
ETHIOPIAN TROUBLES, THERE WOULD BE SOME VOICES RAISED FOR PRE-
EMPTIVE ATTACK. WE DO NOT RPT NOT BELIEVE THIS IS SOMALI ASSESS-
MENT OF ETHIOPIAN PICTURE AT PRESENT, HOWEVER.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MOGADISCIO 1203

MILITARY FOR POLADS

6. GSDR WOULD BE PREPARED TO BEAR ECONOMIC COSTS OF RELATIVELY
QUICK AND CONCLUSIVE MILITARY ACTION, BUT ECONOMIC FACTORS ARGUE
STRONGLY AGAINST PROLONGED CONFLICT. SOMALIA IS ALREADY AT EX-
TREME MARGIN OF POVERTY. ECONOMY IS BEING HIT HARD BY RISING
PRICES OF IMPORTS, INCLUDING FOOD. COUNTRY DEPENDS FOR ITS IN-

VESTMENT BUDGET ALMOST TOTALLY ON OUTSIDE SUPPORT, SOME OF WHICH MIGHT BE JEOPARDIZED BY PROLONGED CONFLICT. CURRENT LEADERSHIP HAS REAL AMBITIONS FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOMALIA AND ITS PEOPLE. THEY WOULD BE MOST RELUCTANT TO SEE THESE PROSPECTS LOST THROUGH PROLONGED FIGHTING - OR MILITARY STALEMATE WHICH REQUIRED COUNTRY TO SUPPORT STRONG FORCES ALONG

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TROUBLED CEASE-FIRE LINE WITH CONSTANT THREAT OF ETHIOPIAN REVANCHE.

7. INTERNAL REACTION TO QUICK VICTORY WOULD BE GOOD, BUT GSDR DOES NOT RPT NOT NEED WAR TO MAINTAIN ITS HOLD ON POPULATION. PROLONGED CONFLICT OR STALEMATE WOULD PRODUCE STRAINS, AND GSDR MUST CONSIDER POSSIBILITY THAT IEG COULD EXPLOIT THESE. UNSUCCESSFUL MILITARY ACTION COULD HAVE SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES, ESPECIALLY IN ARMED FORCES.

8. SIAD AND HIS COLLEAGUES, DESPITE THEIR DIFFERENCES OF ORIENTATION, SEEM TO US TO BE PRETTY PRAGMATIC BUNCH. WE BELIEVE THEY WILL CONTINUE VIEW ABOVE FACTORS AS ARGUING PERSUASIVELY AGAINST ATTACKING ETHIOPIA UNLESS SITUATION IN THAT COUNTRY DETERIORATES TO POINT WHERE THEY FEEL THEY COULD TAKE AND HOLD OGADEN THROUGH BRIEF AND RELATIVELY UNCONTESTED MILITARY ACTION.

9. THESE LEADERS MUST, OF COURSE, TAKE VIEWS OF MILITARY BELOW THEM INTO ACCOUNT. WE SUSPECT THEIR MOST SENIOR MILITARY SUBORDINATES ARE PRETTY WELL-INFORMED AND PRAGMATIC (THOUGHT THIS JUDGMENT IS BASED ON GENERALIZED CONSIDERATIONS RATHER THAN SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE). WE CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT MANY MIDDLE-RANKING OFFICERS WOULD WANT SOMALIA TO USE ITS NEW WEAPONS, BUT WE NOTE THAT THESE SAME INDIVIDUALS WOULD BE ESPECIALLY CONSCIOUS OF DESIRABILITY OF MASTERING NEW EQUIPMENT BEFORE TAKING ACTION. WE DOUBT VIEWS OF LOWER RANKS EXERT MUCH INFLUENCE.

10. SOVIET VIEWS WOULD BE IMPORTANT, PARTICULARLY AS THEY KEEP SOMALIS ON SHORT TETHER WITH REGARD TO POL AND OTHER LOGISTICAL BACKUP. SOVIET ADVICE, WE SUSPECT, WOULD BE AGAINST MAJOR MILITARY ACTION. SOVIETS BENEFIT FROM TENSION IN HORN, BUT WE HERE DOUBT THEY WOULD BE COMFORTABLE WITH SUDDEN CHANGES IN STATUS QUO WHICH COULD END UP BY JEOPARDIZING THEIR POSITION OR ABOUT WARFARE IN THIS SENSITIVE AND STRATEGIC AREA SO CLOSE TO MIDDLE EAST. THEY WOULD PRESUMABLY BE PARTICULARLY UNEASY ABOUT CONFLICT BETWEEN COUNTRIES LINKED TO US AND USSR RESPECTIVELY. HOWEVER, IF SOVIETS FELT SOMALIS COULD DEAL DECISIVE DEFEAT TO ETHIOPIAN EMPIRE WITH QUICK BLOW, WE WONDER HOW HARD THEY WOULD WORK TO PREVENT IT.

11. ARAB ADVICE IS PRESUMABLY MIXED. WE DOUBT THERE WOULD BE

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MUCH NET ARAB ENCOURAGEMENT FOR SOMALIS TO TAKE EARLY MILITARY ACTION, THOUGH SOMALIS WOULD PROBABLY FEEL THAT IF THEY DID MOVE THEY COULD COUNT ON POST FACTO MORAL SUPPORT FROM ARAB LEAGUE AND PERHAPS LIMITED TANGIBLE ASSISTANCE FROM ONE OR TWO OF ITS MORE EXTREMIST MEMBERS.

12. GSDR KNOWS SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN STATES WOULD CONDEMN A SOMALI ATTACK. SIAD'S OAU CHAIRMANSHIP WOULD MAKE IT PARTICULARLY BAD FORM TO ATTACK ONE OF OAU'S KEY FOUNDERS. WE DO NOT RPT NOT FEEL THIS AFRICAN OPPOSITION WOULD BE ENOUGH TO PREVENT SIAD FROM TAKING ADVANTAGE OF WHAT HE CONSIDERED A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO GRAB OGADEN WITH EASE, BUT TI WOULD HELP TIP A MARGINAL DECISION.

13. WE WOULD THEREFORE CONCLUDE THAT EXTERNAL PRESSURES ON RULING GROUP WOULD TEND TO REINFORCE AN APPROACH WHICH AVOIDED SOMALI MILITARY ACTION UNLESS THEY CONFIDENT THIS WOULD BE QUICKLY AND LASTINGLY SUCCESSFUL. WE THINK THIS IS APPROACH WHICH SOMALI LEADERSHIP WILL FOLLOW FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE.
KIRK

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